

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PEOPLE

*“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.”
—ACTS 2:17*

Throughout Scripture there are three key words that describe how the Holy Spirit works with people. Previously, the Holy Spirit was available to a limited number of people for limited purposes, but on the Day of Pentecost, in fulfillment of the prophecy that Joel had given, the Holy Spirit was made available to all people and His coming is for all time.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit lived among people. Through the prophet Haggai, God said, “This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you” (Haggai 2:5). This is more corporate than personal. It wasn’t that the Holy Spirit was with any particular person and they were indwelt by Him, but as a group of people and a nation, the Holy Spirit was among them. However, there were occasions when the Holy Spirit indwelt people for specific tasks, such as in the case of Balaam, but when the task was completed the Holy Spirit withdrew.

In the Gospels, when Jesus lived on earth, the key word is that the Holy Spirit was with them. Jesus said to His disciples, “He lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). Being in people was what Pentecost was going to make possible, but during that time, He was with them. After Pentecost, the key word is that the Holy Spirit is in people. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:19, “Don’t you know your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?”

There is a significant progression in the relationship the Holy Spirit has with people; first, ‘among’ them, then ‘with’ them and now ‘in’ them. Being ‘in people’ is something much more intimate and personal. In Ephesians 1:13, Paul says, “Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.” Once we are in Christ, we will never lose the Holy Spirit; however, we can quench Him, grieve Him and limit what He would normally do in our lives if we are living outside of God’s will or neglecting our relationship with Him.

Our experience of the Holy Spirit is much fuller and never less than that of the Old Testament characters. In Christ, we receive the permanence and working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. His presence in us not only guarantees our salvation, but greatly blesses us in that through His work, we are being transformed into an ever increasing likeness to Christ.

PRAYER: Thank You heavenly Father for the precious gift of your Holy Spirit. I ask for a deeper work of His presence in me so that I may increasingly reflect your character.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I live everyday consciously aware of the Spirit’s presence within me?